

## REMARKS

The objection to claims 15 and 17 - 19 and the indication that such claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, is acknowledged. By the present amendment, claims 15 and 17 - 19 have been written in independent form such that applicants submit that these claims should now be in condition for allowance.

Additionally by the present amendment, claims 1 - 4, 6 - 14, 16 and 24 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof, with claims 20 - 23, which are in dependent form, being amended to depend from claim 15, which should now be in condition for allowance. Additionally, applicants have presented new claims 25 - 36 which correspond to the grouping of claims 20 - 23, dependent upon claims 17, 18 and 19, respectively, which claims should be in condition for allowance, and therewith the newly added dependent claims thereof.

As to the rejection of claims 1 - 4, 6 - 14, 16 and 22 - 23 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Usui et al in view of Sakashita (6,501,451); the rejection of claims 1 - 4, 6 - 14, 16 and 20 - 23 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Usui et al in view of Uehara et al (6,329,980); and the rejection of claim 24 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Usui et al in view of Sakashita or Uehara et al and Shimomura et al (5,406,305); such rejections are considered to be obviated by the cancellation of claims 1 - 4, 6 - 14, 16 and 24 and the amendment of claims 22 - 23 to depend from allowable claim 15 and the presentation of claims 25 - 36 which correspond to claims 20 - 23 dependent upon allowable claims 17, 18 and 19, respectively. Accordingly, a discussion of the cited art in relation to the canceled or amended claims is considered to be unnecessary.

Since the only claims remaining in this application represent claims indicated as being allowable when written in independent form, i.e., claims 15 and 17 - 19, and the dependent claims 20 - 23 and the newly added claims 25 - 36 which correspond to claims 20 - 23 dependent respectively from claims 17, 18 and 19, should all now be in condition for allowance, applicants submit that the only claims remaining in this application should now be in condition for allowance and issuance of an action of a favorable nature is courteously solicited.

To the extent necessary, applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the deposit account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case: 501.39837X00), and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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